

EDIE FAKE

Western Exhibitions

The dozen gouache-and-ink compositions in Edie Fake's recent show (all 2018) were somewhat deceptive. Semiabstract images bearing electric colors, geometric patterns, and push-pull dynamics, they suggested art for art's sake. But they were layered with allusions to the transgender artist's explorations of sexuality and identity. Such combinations of eye-catching designs and personal and political concerns place Fake in the tradition of the 1970s and '80s Pattern and Decoration artists—a connection also claimed in "Surface/Depth: The Decorative after Miriam Schapiro," a group exhibition held earlier this year at New York's Museum of Arts and Design that delved into the influence of one of the movement's pioneers and included Fake's work.

The Evanston, Illinois, native, who now lives in the California High Desert just outside of Joshua Tree, has something of a double career. He is probably best known as a force in the alternative comics scene, with *Gaylord Phoenix*, his 2011 book about a nonbinary humanoid on a journey of self-discovery, winning the Ignatz Award for outstanding graphic novel. At the same time, he is an up-and-comer in the art world whose work not only was included in "Surface/Depth" but also will be featured in the Des Moines Art Center's 2019 show "For Today I Am a Boy: Contemporary Queer Abstraction." During the peak of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s and '90s, some artists confronting the ravages of the disease and examining other aspects of LGBTQ life camouflaged their messages via abstraction because of the controversial nature of the subject matter. Though one would hope our society has advanced enough that such disguising is no longer necessary,

Kyle Staver: *Swan Flight*, 2017, oil on canvas, 68 by 54 inches; at Zürcher.

Edie Fake: *The Bindery*, 2018, gouache and ink on panel, 18 by 24 inches; at Western Exhibitions.

